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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-seventh session
Agenda item 6

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING POLICIES OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND SEGREGATION AND OF APARTHEID, IN ALL COUNTRIES, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES: REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMISSION UNDER COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION 8 (XXIII)

Written statement submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples, a non-governmental organization in consultative status (category II)

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[3 August 1995]

The human rights situation in Nagaland

1. The occupation of free Nagaland by the Indian and Burmese armed forces in violation of Naga nationhood and the stubborn resistance put up by the Naga people has lasted 47 years. The atrocities perpetrated in the course of this time on the Nagas are little known to the outside world. The situation is precarious because the Naga people have been put under "state of emergency", "President's rules", "disturbed area", and so on for most of the last 41 years. The situation is dangerous again due to the renewed declaration since 1 April 1995 of a fresh Nagaland "disturbed area", in an effort to suppress the Naga people and their right to self-determination.

2. In the past three years, more than 1,000 innocent Nagas have been killed. Over 100 villages were incinerated, thousands are uprooted and homeless. Indiscriminate killing continues with impunity. No fact-finding mission has ever been allowed to enter Nagaland. There is no regard for human rights. We can describe a few recent incidents out of many:

(a) On 27 December 1994, at 9 a.m., the 16th Battalion of Maratha Infantry in Mokokchung rounded up local people and beat them up. Shops were looted and burnt. The Naga army then arrived and engaged the troops. Lt. Col. Boonacha, the commander of the Indian armed forces was killed. But 8 innocent civilians were killed and 4 were burnt alive by the Indian troops, 3 women were raped and many taken into custody, 48 residential houses and 89 commercial properties were burnt.

(b) On 23 January 1995, Indian armed forces fired indiscriminately at Akuluto town, which resulted in one dead and massive destruction of public properties.

(c) On 5 March 1995, an Indian army convoy carrying 600 soldiers of the Rashtriya Rifles entered Kohima town. The tyre of one of the lead vehicles got punctured, which was mistaken for an attack by the Naga army. Thereupon, the Rashtriya Rifles opened indiscriminate fire from the back of the truck. Within minutes all vehicles behind followed suit, directing their fire at random towards any Naga pedestrians who happened to be at the roadside. During the first fusillade 13 Naga civilians sustained wounds and 4 were shot dead. The Indian soldiers then started shelling with mortars and RPGs into the populated area of Kohima town. Two Naga children were killed by shrapnel. The Rashtriya Rifles ran amok through the streets, wounding a further 10 civilians and killing 2 more. In the ensuing period, lasting over 2 hours, 136 Nagas were taken into custody by the 29th Assam Rifles and the Central Reserve Police Force and subjected to various forms of torture. Many more were just beaten in the town with rifle butts. Homes were looted and over 50 houses damaged by shellfire.

(d) On 19 June 1995, Mr. Shelly Chara was shot dead at Imphal by secret Indian agents. He was an outstanding student leader and a prominent human rights activist. He attended the Working Group on Indigenous Peoples in Geneva last year (1994). He spoke so well in the meeting that there was prolonged applause from the audience. The Indian Government took serious exception to his speech. He was due to attend this year's session also. Presumably he was killed on that account. Such an act is pure and simple criminal treachery against the cause of humanity which deserves outright condemnation.

It is profoundly regretted that four-decade-long genocidal campaigns of the Indian and Burmese armed forces against the Naga people have never been called into question by the Commission on Human Rights. We urge

that the danger inherent in the suppression of the people's rights be looked into before it is too late, if peace and justice are to prevail. The fact is that the root cause of most of the cases of gross violations of human rights in the world today is the suppression of the right of self-determination of aggrieved peoples by stronger ones. Therefore, we earnestly appeal to the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to send a fact-finding mission to Nagaland to see the conditions there in the right perspective.